



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas ***L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS LEADS GROUP TO HALEY FARM IN TENNESSEE TO ADVANCE PLANS FOR "FREEDOM SCHOOLS" IN SECOND

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas is leading a 10-member delegation to Clinton, Tenn., this week to participate in the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools annual conference in anticipation of launching of similar education programs in his district next summer.

The CDF, founded by pioneering children's advocate Marian Wright Edelman, operates 100 Freedom Schools throughout the nation. The schools provide high quality summer and after-school enrichment programs through a model curriculum.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas attended a CDF training session in June and has been working with the organization on plans to establish several of its successful programs in the Second District.

Last month, the Supervisor participated in the CDF's "Harambee" program at the Altadena Elementary School. The former teacher lauded the program and responded to questions from students about his responsibilities as an elected official.

"The CDF is the foremost national proponent of policies and programs that provide children with the resources they need to succeed, championing policies that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure

their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation,” the Supervisor said.

In addition to its summer and after-school enrichment programs, the CDF programs support children and families around five essential components, including high quality academic enrichment, parent and family involvement, social action and civic engagement, intergenerational servant leadership development and nutrition, health, and mental health.

Accompanying the Supervisor to the two-day conference at the famed Alex Haley Farm, which ends Tuesday, is a delegation of pastors, educators, activists and social service providers.

The participants include Marqueece Harris-Dawson of the Community Coalition; Rev. Paul Hill of Grace United Methodist Church; Rev. Norman Johnson of First New Christian Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church; Rev. S. Dianna Masters of Wesleyan United Methodist Church; and Danette McBride of Para Los Ninos.

The other participants are Dr. George J. McKenna of Educational Consulting Services; Rev. Leslie White of Grant AME Church; Dr. Linda A. Smith, the Supervisor’s senior deputy for Human Development and Services; and Darryl Lucien, an intern in the Supervisor’s office.